

19 FEB 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Procedures for Monitoring the Flow of Cable Traffic

REFERENCE: Action Memorandum No. A-359 dated 28 January 1964

1. Pursuant to the referent Action Memorandum, I have had a review made of the feasibility of establishing procedures for methodically cutting back on cable traffic. I am convinced that the imposition of quotas is not the way to attack the problem, yet that would be the one specific manner in which an arbitrary reduction could be achieved. I agree fully with the desire expressed in the Action Memorandum that we should avoid haphazard cuts that could in the end prove more costly to the Agency. I have, within the past several weeks, impressed fully on the operating components of the Clandestine Services the great need for maximum economy in the use of cables, consistent with our operating needs.

2. As a result of my instructions, all field stations have been made aware of the importance of exercising greater discretion in using cable communications, especially where teletape or regular dispatch would suffice. In consultation with the Office of Communications, it has been made clear to me that the imposition of an arbitrary limit on the length of cables could easily be self-defeating, since the problem in the Office of Communications is the number of cables, rather than their length. The time consuming aspect focuses on the processing of each cable, irrespective of its word content, so that if we were to limit the length of cables arbitrarily, we might well find that we were unwittingly causing the number to increase, a clearly undesirable development.

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3. I have instructed our staff elements and our division chiefs to make a continuing check on our use of cables and to take steps to correct any situations which reflect an inadequate understanding of the need for maximum economy consistent with operational requirements. I am particularly urging that cables not be used for administrative and similar matters excepting in emergency situations. I believe that the problem can best be dealt with by this means of continuous, daily attention. If this does not work out after a reasonable trial period, we will turn to other devices.

(Signed) Richard Helms

Richard Helms
Deputy Director for Plans

cc: DDCI
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